VENT APPARATUS

Technical Field

[0001] The invention pertains to vents. Particular embodiments of the invention relate to vents used in buildings.

Background

[0002] Many buildings have vents which provide routes for exchange, ventilation, circulation and/or movement of gas through the building envelope. Such gases may comprise air or water vapour, for example. Buildings may have ventilation systems, which take in "fresh" air from outside of the building and expel "stale" air from inside the building. Fresh air may be taken into a building or stale air may be expelled from a building through one or more vents. Some buildings incorporate other systems and/or apparatus, such as air conditioning systems, range hoods and forced air clothes dryers, which require gas flow between the inside and outside of a building.

[0003] Typically, a vent is associated with a conduit which conveys gas towards or away from the vent. A vent typically comprises a vent passageway in fluid communication with the associated conduit to provide a means for gas flow through the building envelope. Vents may provide a number of additional functions. For example, vents may comprise weatherproofing features to minimize the amount of moisture leakage into the building or the building layers. Vents may also provide a more aesthetically pleasing terminus for their associated conduits.

[0004] There are many vent designs known in the art. For example:

- Canadian patent No. 2,062,907 (Sirjoo) discloses a vent incorporating an adjustable screw cap vent cover which extends outwardly from the external wall of a building and which is adjustable to permit air flow through the vent when the cap is

open and to prevent air flow through the vent when the cap is closed; and

- Canadian patent No. 2,357,531 (Myint) shows a security air vent which allows for the flow of air, but which comprises a screen having S-shaped structural members for preventing the back flow of solids or liquids into the associated building aperture.

[0005] Some vents comprise vent covers which extend outwardly from the exterior surface of the building. Such vent covers may provide weatherproofing for the vent and may also provide desirable aesthetics. Vents and vent covers may be formed in a single unitary construction.

[0006] Vents are preferably sized and shaped such that they are easily mounted to the building structure and easily coupled to their associated conduits. Typically, a vent comprises a flange or the like, which is sized and shaped to engage its associated conduit. Where vents and vent covers are made from a single unitary construction, a separate vent and vent cover combination is required for each size and shape of conduit.

[0007] Vents may incorporate dampers to control the flow of gases and/or other materials through the vent. Typically, a damper is formed from a flat (i.e. planar) piece of material that is hingeably mounted to permit flow of gas through the vent in a desired direction and to restrict flow of gas through the vent in the opposing direction. Some dampers undesirably restrict the flow of gas in the desired direction.

[0008] Some vents (or vent covers) comprise screens. Typically, such screens are integrally formed with the vent or are attached to the vent using fasteners, such as staples, screws, rivets or the like. Screens help to prevent debris from accumulating in the vent and from

potentially entering into the building interior. As screens are typically located near the outermost ends of vents, there is a considerable likelihood for a screen to be damaged or to weaken over time because of exposure to the elements. Replacement of a screen that is integrally formed with a vent component requires replacing the entire vent component and may require removal of outer building layers. Replacement of a screen that is attached to a vent component using fasteners requires removing and replacing the fasteners which can damage the body of the vent component.

[0009] There is a general desire to provide vents which ameliorate at least some of the aforementioned or other disadvantages of existing vents.

Summary of the Invention

[0010] A first aspect of the invention provides a vent which comprises a substantially hollow cover member and a screen. The cover member has a cover member surface which defines a vent passageway and which comprises a protrusion. The protrusion projects into the vent passageway. The screen comprises a plurality of screen apertures and a first bend for receiving the protrusion. The first bend in the screen is resiliently deformable to exert pressure on the protrusion and to secure the screen to the cover member such that the screen spans the vent passageway.

[0011] The screen may comprise a first surface, which extends from the first bend along a first side of the protrusion, and a second surface, which extends from the first bend along a second side of the protrusion. The first and second surfaces may exert pressure on the protrusion.

[0012] The screen may comprise a third surface, which extends from the second surface across the vent passageway to a first portion of the cover member surface on an opposing side of the vent passageway from the protrusion. The screen may also comprise a fourth surface, which extends from the third surface along the first portion of the cover member surface.

[0013] The fourth surface may receive one or more projections which extend from the first portion of the cover member surface and project through one or more corresponding screen apertures. One or more fastener members may also be provided. Each fastener member may be coupleable to a corresponding one of the one or more projections for retaining the fourth surface against the first portion of the cover member surface.

[0014] Prior to deformation, the third surface of the screen may be substantially planar or may comprises at least one curve.

[0015] The vent may comprises a a Z-shaped bend on one end thereof. The Z-shaped bend may include the first bend.

[0016] The vent may comprise a damper member located in the vent passageway and pivotally coupled to the cover member. An exterior surface of the damper member may have a profile that is substantially similar to a contour of a second portion of the cover member surface. The profile of the exterior surface of the damper member and the contour of the second portion of the cover member surface may be curved or may comprise a similarly shaped bend.

[0017] The damper member may be pivotable between a closed configuration wherein a distal end of the damper member abuts against

the protrusion and an open-most configuration wherein the exterior surface of the damper member extends along the second portion of the cover member surface.

[0018] The vent may comprise a substantially hollow adapter member. The adapter member may be coupleable to the cover member at its exterior end and to a conduit at its interior end to provide fluid communication between the vent passageway and the conduit.

[0019] The cover member may comprise a pair of substantially parallel flanges which define a slot and the exterior end of the adapter member may comprise a vent flange which is insertable into the slot for coupling the exterior end of the adapter member to the cover member. When the vent flange is inserted in the slot, at least one of the substantially parallel flanges may be resiliently deformed so as to exert pressure on the vent flange.

[0020] Another aspect of the invention provides a vent which comprises a substantially hollow cover member and a damper member. The cover member comprises a cover member surface which defines a vent passageway. A first portion of the cover member surface has a curved contour. The damper member is located in the vent passageway and is pivotally coupled to the cover member. An exterior surface of the damper member has a curved profile that is substantially similar to the curved contour of the first portion of the cover member surface.

[0021] Another aspect of the invention provides a vent which comprises a substantially hollow cover member and a damper member. The cover member comprises a a cover member surface which defines a vent passageway. A first portion of the cover member surface has a first bend in its contour. The damper member is located in the vent

passageway and is pivotally coupled to the cover member. An exterior surface of the damper member has a second bend, which has a profile that is substantially similar to a contour of the first bend.

[0022] Further aspects of the invention, features of specific embodiments of the invention and applications of the invention are described below.

Brief Description of the Drawings

[0023] In drawings which depict non-limiting embodiments of the invention:

Figure 1 is an isometric view of a vent according to a particular embodiment of the invention;

Figure 2 is a cross-sectional view of the Figure 1 vent installed in the pitched roof of a building;

Figure 3A is an isometric view of the screen of the Figure 1 vent;

Figure 3B is an isometric view of a vent screen according to an alternative embodiment of the invention;

Figures 4A and 4B are partial cross sectional views depicting the mounting of the screen to the cover member of the Figure 1 vent;

Figure 4C is a partial cross-sectional view depicting the mounting of an alternative screen to the cover member of the Figure 1 vent;

Figure 4D is a partial cross-sectional view depicting an alternative mechanism for mounting the screen to the cover member of a vent according to an alternative embodiment of the invention;

Figure 5A and 5B are respectively cross sectional and bottom views of the damper member of the Figure 1 vent;

Figure 6 is a partial cross-sectional view of the Figure 1 vent showing detail of the damper member;

Figure 7 is a cross-sectional view of the adapter member of the Figure 1 vent;

Figure 8 is an isometric view of the adapter member of the Figure 1 vent; and

Figure 9 is a partial exploded cross-sectional view depicting the attachment of the adapter member to the cover member of the Figure 1 vent.

Detailed Description

[0024] Throughout the following description, specific details are set forth in order to provide a more thorough understanding of the invention. However, the invention may be practised without these particulars. In other instances, well known elements have not been shown or described in detail to avoid unnecessarily obscuring the invention. Accordingly, the specification and drawings are to be regarded in an illustrative, rather than a restrictive, sense.

[0025] The invention disclosed herein relates to vents which provide a route for the exchange of air or other gases through a building envelope. Typically, a vent is mounted to provide a passageway through the building envelope (i.e. the walls or roof). The interior end of the vent may be coupled to a conduit, which may generally comprise any aperture, duct, passageway, flume, spout, hose, tube, pipe, channel or the like. Typical examples of conduits include, but are not limited to, air ducts for moving air within a building's heating, cooling or ventilation systems and exhaust hoses from forced-air clothes dryers and/or air conditioning systems.

[0026] Vents according to preferred embodiments of the invention comprise a substantially hollow cover member having a cover member surface which defines a vent passageway. A vent may also comprise a substantially hollow adapter member. The exterior end of the adapter member is coupleable to the cover member and the interior end of the adapter member is coupleable to a conduit to provide fluid communication between the vent passageway and the conduit. The vent may comprise a screen which spans the vent passageway. The screen preferably has a plurality of resiliently deformable surfaces and/or bends, which secure the screen to the cover member without using separate fasteners. The screen may have a Z-shaped bend at one end thereof. The vent may also comprise a damper member which is hingeably coupled to the cover member surface. The exterior surface of the damper member may have a profile that is similar to the contour of a portion of the cover member surface. The damper is pivotable between a closed configuration and an open-most configuration, where the exterior surface of the damper member extends along the portion of cover member surface.

[0027] Figures 1 and 2 depict a vent **11** according to a particular embodiment of the invention. As shown most effectively in the cross-sectional view of Figure 2, vent **11** comprises: a cover member **12**, a damper member **13**, an adapter member **14** and a screen **16**. Preferably, cover member **12**, damper member **13** and adapter member **14** are made of plastic. Screen **16** may be metallic or plastic. Those skilled in the art will appreciate that in alternative embodiments, vent **11** and any of its components may be constructed from a wide variety of suitable materials.

[0028] Figure 2 depicts vent **11** installed in the roof **22** of a building **24**. In the illustrated embodiment, roof **22** is pitched at an

angle. Vents embodying the inventive concepts of the present invention may generally be installed in any building surface. For example, vent **11** may also be installed in a roof having a substantially horizontal orientation or a wall having a substantially vertical orientation. Building **24** has a conduit **30** defined by the walls **28A**, **28B**. Cover member **12** comprises a substantially hollow body having a cover member surface **69** which defines a vent passageway **36**. As shown in Figure 2, vent passageway **36** extends from an interior end **31** to an exterior end **34** of cover member **12**.

[0029] This description and the accompanying claims use a number of directional conventions to clarify their meaning:

(i) "outward", "outwardly", "outwardmost", "exterior" and similar words are used to refer to directions that are generally oriented from an interior end **31**, toward an exterior end **34** of vent passageway **36** or from an interior toward an exterior of building **22** (see for example arrow **56** of Figure 2);

(ii) "inward", "inwardly", "inwardmost", "interior" and similar words are used to refer to directions that are generally oriented from an exterior end **34**, toward an interior end **31** of vent passageway **36** or from an exterior toward an interior of building **22** (see for example arrow **58** of Figure 2); and

(iii) "transverse", "transversely", "side", "sideways" and similar words refer to any direction that extends along the building surface in which vent **11** is mounted. In the illustrated embodiment of Figure 2, vent **11** is mounted in pitched roof **22** and double headed arrow **60** indicates two examples of transverse directions.

Those skilled in the art will appreciate that directional definitions used in this description and the accompanying claims depend on the specific orientation of vent **11** and the building surface in which vent **11** is mounted. Accordingly, these directional terms are not strictly defined and should not be interpreted narrowly.

[0030] Figure 2 depicts vent **11** installed in pitched roof **22**. As shown in Figures 1 and 2, cover member **12** comprises a mounting flange **38** which extends transversely from an interior end of cover member **12**. In the illustrated embodiment, mounting flange **38** extends between exterior roof layer **40** and interior roof layer **42**. Preferably, cover member **12** is installed when roof **22** is being built, such that mounting flange **38** may be installed in roof **22** after the application of interior roof layer **42**, but prior to the application of exterior roof layer **40**. Mounting flange **38** may be attached to interior roof layer **42** using an adhesive and/or fasteners (not shown). Suitable fasteners may include nails, screws, staples or the like. In alternative embodiments, mounting flange **38** may be attached to the exterior or interior surface of roof layer **40** and/or roof layer **42** during or after fabrication of roof **22**.

[0031] Vent **11** may comprise a screen **16**. Figure 3A shows a screen **16** according to a particular embodiment of the invention. As shown in Figure 3A, screen **16** preferably comprises a grid **44** of material which defines a plurality of rectangular screen apertures **46**. In alternative embodiments, screen **16** may comprise screen apertures **46** with different shapes. Screen apertures **46** have a smaller cross-sectional area than vent passageway **36** and conduit **30**. Preferably, the material from which screen **16** is formed is resilient and deformable, such that screen **16** may be deformed for installation or removal as discussed below. Screen **16** comprises a number of surfaces **62**, **64**, **66**, **68** which are respectively connected by bends **48**, **50** and **52**. For ease

of explanation, surfaces **62**, **64**, **66**, **68** are referred to herein as: first surface **62**, second surface **64**, third surface **66** and fourth surface **68**; and bends **48**, **50**, **52** are referred to as: first bend **48**, second bend **50** and third bend **52**. Preferably, first, second and fourth surfaces **62**, **64**, **68** are substantially planar when screen **16** is in its nominal (i.e. non-deformed) state.

[0032] Third surface **66** forms the main part of screen **16** and has an area that is preferably 5-25 times larger than the first, second and fourth surfaces **62**, **64**, **68**. When screen **16** is installed in cover member **12**, third surface **64** spans vent passageway **36** to help prevent debris from intruding through vent passageway **36** and into building **24**.

[0033] One end of screen **16** comprises a "Z-shaped bend" **65**, which comprises first bend **48** (between first surface **62** and second surface **64**) and second bend **50** (between second surface **64** and third surface **66**). Typically, first bend **48** will have an interior angle Θ_1 in a range of 10-60° in its nominal state. In preferred embodiments, the nominal state of interior angle Θ_1 may be in a range of 15-45°. Typically, second bend **50** will have an interior angle Θ_2 in a range of 10-120° in its nominal state. In preferred embodiments, the nominal state of interior angle Θ_2 may be in a range of 30-90°. Screen **16** also comprises a third bend **52** between third surface **66** and fourth surface **68**. Third bend **52** typically has an interior angle Θ_3 in the range of 30-120° in its nominal state. In preferred embodiments, the nominal state of interior angle Θ_3 may be in a range of 45-90°. As explained in more detail below, bends **48**, **50**, **52** and surfaces **62**, **64**, **66**, **68** permit screen **16** to be mounted to cover member **12** without using separate fasteners.

[0034] Figures 2, 3A, 4A and 4B depict how screen **16** may be removably mounted to cover member **12** without using separate fasteners. When installed, screen **16** spans vent passageway **36**.

[0035] Referring to Figures 2 and 4B, cover member surface **69** comprises a protrusion **74** which projects into vent passageway **36**. Protrusion **74** comprises a pair of sides **76**, **78** which meet at apex **82**. Although depicted as a sharp point, the intersection of sides **76**, **78** at apex **82** may be rounded. As shown best in Figure 4B, screen **16** is installed such that first bend **48** receives protrusion **74** with apex **82** extending into an interior of first bend **48**. At least a portion of first surface **62** extends along side **76** and at least a portion of second surface **64** extends along side **78**. Preferably, the angle Θ_4 between sides **76**, **78** of protrusion **74** is slightly larger than the nominal state of the interior angle Θ_1 of first bend **48** (see Figure 3). In this manner, when screen **16** is installed, first bend **48** is deformed, such that first and second surfaces **62**, **64** tend to exert pressure against sides **76**, **78** of protrusion **74**. The pressure exerted by first and second surfaces **62**, **64** on protrusion **74** helps to secure screen **16** to cover member **12**. Optionally, as shown in Figure 4B, a user may crimp (i.e. permanently deform) an overhanging distal end portion **80** of first surface **62**. Crimping distal end portion **80** provides an additional means for securing screen **16** to protrusion **74**.

[0036] Referring to Figures 2 and 4A, cover member surface **69** comprises a portion **70** on an opposite side of vent passageway **36** from protrusion **74**. Screen **16** is installed such that fourth surface **68** extends along portion **70** of cover member surface **69**. A shown best in Figure 4B, portion **70** comprises a projection **72** which extends through a screen aperture **46** in fourth surface **68**. Preferably, when installed, fourth surface **68** is slightly compressed towards third surface **66** (i.e.

angle Θ_3 of third bend **52** is compressed). This compression of screen **16** causes fourth surface **68** to apply resilient pressure against portion **70** of cover member surface **69** and/or against projection **72**. Although not shown in the illustrated views, cover member **12** preferably comprises a plurality of projections **72** which are located at spaced apart intervals across portion **70** of cover member surface **69**. Each of the plurality of projections **72** extends from portion **70** and projects through a corresponding screen aperture **46** in fourth surface **68**.

[0037] In the illustrated embodiment of Figure 4A, projections **72** each have one surface **49** which is oriented at substantially right angles to portion **70** of cover member surface **69** and a second surface **51** which forms a non-orthogonal angle with portion **70** of cover member surface **69**. This shape of projections **72** facilitates easy installation and removal of screen **16**. In other embodiments, projections **72** may have other shapes. For example, projections **72** may be bent or hook-shaped to help retain screen **16** in place once installed, all of the surfaces of projections **72** that abut portion **70** may be oriented at substantially right angles to portion **70** or all of the surfaces of projection **70** that abut portion **70** may be oriented at non-orthogonal angles to portion **70**.

[0038] Screen **16** may be mounted to cover member **12** by installing one end of screen **16** and deforming screen **16** so that the other end of screen **16** may be installed. For example, a person may install fourth surface **68** against portion **70** of cover member surface **69** with projections **72** extending through screen apertures **46** and then deform screen **16** until protrusion **74** is received in first bend **48**. Alternatively, a person may install screen **16** by fitting first bend **48** over protrusion **74** and then deforming screen **16** until fourth surface **68** fits against portion **70** of cover member surface **69** with projections **72** extending through screen apertures **46**. Removal of screen **16** from cover member **12** may

involve a similar process of deforming screen **16**, so that protrusion **74** may be removed from first bend **48** and projections **72** may be extracted from their respective screen apertures **46**.

[0039] Figure 3B depicts a screen **16'** according to an alternative embodiment of the invention. In most respects, screen **16'** is similar to screen **16** (Figure 3A) and similar reference numbers are used to refer to similar features of screens **16** and **16'**. Screen **16'** differs from screen **16** in that third surface **66'** of screen **16'** is planar in its nominal state. When installed in cover member **12**, screen **16'** may be planar or may be deformed to be slightly curved. In other respects, screen **16'** is similar to screen **16** described above.

[0040] Figure 4C depicts the mounting of a screen **16''** to portion **70** of cover member surface **69** in accordance with an alternative embodiment of the invention. In most respects screen **16''** is similar to screen **16** (Figure 3A) and similar reference numbers are used to refer to similar features of screens **16** and **16''**. Screen **16''** differs from screen **16**, in that third bend **52''** of screen **16''** bends inwardly (i.e. in the opposite direction as third bend **52** of screen **16**) and fourth screen surface **68''** of screen **16''** extends inwardly along portion **70** of cover member surface **69** (i.e. as opposed to fourth screen surface **68** of screen **16**, which extends outwardly along portion **70** of cover member surface **69** (Figure 4A)). Because of the direction of third bend **52''**, interior angle Θ_3'' of third bend **52''** is on the interior side of screen **16''** in contrast to angle Θ_3 of third bend **52**, which is on the exterior side of screen **16** (Figure 4A). Interior angle Θ_3'' is typically in a range of 30-120° in its nominal state. In preferred embodiments, the nominal state of angle Θ_3'' may be in a range of 45-90°. In other respects screen **16''** is similar to screen **16** described above.

[0041] Figure 4D is a partial cross-sectional view depicting the mounting of a screen **16** to portion **70** of cover member surface **69** according to another alternative embodiment of the invention. Screen **16** of the Figure 4D embodiment is the same as screen **16** in Figures 3A and 4A and similar reference numbers are used to refer to similar features. The embodiment of Figure 4D differs from that of Figures 3A and 4A, in that projection **72'** comprises generally parallel sidewalls **37**, **39** and a fastener member **71** is provided to help couple screen **16** to cover member **12**. In other embodiments (not shown), sidewalls **37**, **39** need not be parallel and may approach one another as they extend from portion **70** of cover member surface **69**. Preferably, projection **72'** is integral with cover member **12** and portion **70** of cover member surface **69**. In the illustrated embodiment, projection **72'** extends generally orthogonally from portion **70** of cover member surface **69**, but in other embodiments, projection **72'** may extend from portion **70** at other angles. Projection **72'** may also be round in cross-section (i.e. such that sidewalls **37**, **39** are part of a single cylindrical surface).

[0042] In some embodiments, projection **72'** may be threaded and fastener member **71** may comprises a nut or may otherwise be threaded, such that fastener member **71** may be screwed onto projection **72'** to help retain fourth surface **68** of screen **16** against portion **70** of cover member surface **69**. In other embodiments, fastener member **71** may comprise a deformable aperture (not shown), such that fastener member **71** may be pushed onto projection **72** to form a friction fit against sidewalls **37**, **39** and to help retain fourth surface **68** of screen **16** against portion **70** of cover member surface **69**. Sidewalls **37**, **39** of projection **72'** may comprise ribs (not shown) to enhance the strength of such a friction fit. In other respects, screen **16** and the mounting thereof is similar to screen **16** described above.

[0043] As shown in Figure 2, vent **11** may comprise a damper member **13**. Damper member **13** is shown in more detail in Figures 5A and 5B, which respectively depict cross-sectional and bottom views of damper member **13**, and in Figure 6, which shows a magnified partial cross-sectional view of vent **11** depicting damper member **13** in its closed configuration **13A** and its open-most configuration **13B** (shown in dashed lines). In the illustrated embodiment, damper member **13** comprises a body **92** that has a hinge end **96**, a distal end **94** and an exterior surface **93** having a generally curved profile.

[0044] Hinge end **96** of damper member **13** is hingeably coupled to cover member **12**. In the illustrated embodiment, damper member **13** is coupled to cover member **12** by a plurality of hinges **90**. Each hinge **90** preferably comprises a cylindrical dowel **98** and an aperture **104**. In the illustrated embodiment, each hinge **90** also comprises a pair of hinge guides **100**. As shown best in Figure 6, for each hinge **90**, cover member **12** comprises a pair of dowel enclosure members **102A**, **102B** which project into vent passageway **36**. In the illustrated embodiment, dowels **98** and dowel enclosure members **102A**, **102B** are shaped and/or sized such that dowels **98** may be removably inserted between dowel enclosure members **102A**, **102B** by deforming dowel enclosure members **102A**, **102B** (i.e. in a "snap-together" fit). Once inserted, dowels **98** are pivotally supported between dowel enclosure members **102A**, **102B** to hingeably couple damper member **13** to cover member **12**. When damper member **13** is pivoted at hinges **90**, dowel enclosure members **102A**, **102B** may project through apertures **104** in the body **92** of damper member **13**. Hinges **90** may comprise guides **100** on either side of dowels **98** to help limit undesired translation of damper member **13** (Figure 5B).

[0045] Hinges **90** permit damper member **13** to pivot through a range of angular positions between its closed configuration **13A** and its open-most configuration **13B**. When damper member **13** is in its closed configuration **13A**, its distal end **94** abuts against protrusion **74** (or some other portion of cover member surface **69**), such that gas or other material is largely prevented from flowing inwardly through vent passageway **36** (i.e. in the direction of arrow **108** (Figure 6)). There may be a limited amount of inward gas flow through damper member **13** when damper member **13** is in its closed configuration **13B**. When pressure or other conditions cause gas (or other material) to travel outwardly through vent passageway **36** (i.e. in the direction of arrow **106** (Figure 6)), the flow of gas causes damper member **13** to pivot (at hinges **90**) from its closed configuration **13A** toward its open-most configuration **13B**.

[0046] Gas may flow outwardly when damper member **13** is at any angular position between its closed configuration **13A** and its open-most configuration **13B**. Advantageously, however, the exterior surface **93** of damper member **13** has a generally curved profile, such that when damper member **13** is in its open-most configuration **13B**, the exterior surface **93** of damper member **13** conforms substantially with the generally curved contour of a portion **73** of cover member surface **69**. When damper member **13** is in its open-most configuration **13B**, the conformance of the profile of exterior surface **93** and the contour of portion **73** of cover member surface **69** minimizes the intrusion of damper member **13** into vent passageway **36** and minimizes the corresponding impediment to the outward flow of gas caused by damper member **13**. The conformance of the profile of exterior surface **93** and the contour of portion **73** of cover member surface **69** provides vent passageway **36** with a maximum cross-sectional area which permits a maximum outward flow of gas through vent passageway **36**.

[0047] Those skilled in the art will appreciate that the invention may comprise a damper member **13** having a different exterior surface profile and a portion **73** of cover member surface **69** having a different contour (i.e. other than curved), provided that there is conformance between the profile of the exterior surface **93** of damper member **13** and the contour of portion **73** of cover member surface **69** to maximize the cross-sectional area of vent passageway **36** and the outward flow of gas through damper member **13** when damper member **13** is in its open-most configuration. For example, the exterior surface **93** of damper member **13** may comprise one or more bends to conform with a similarly bent contour of portion **73** of cover member surface **69**.

[0048] As shown best in Figures 5A and 5B, the interior surface of damper member **13** may comprise a tab **101** which facilitates the removal of damper member **13** from cover member **12**. To remove damper member **13** from cover member **12**, a person may extend their hand through an interior end **31** of vent passageway **36** to reach tab **101** and may pull tab **101** (and damper member **13**) inwardly to dislodge dowels **98** from dowel enclosure members **102A**, **102B**. Damper member **13** may then be withdrawn through vent passageway **36**.

[0049] As shown in Figure 2, vent **11** may comprise an adapter member **14** which couples cover member **12** to conduit **30**. Adapter member **14** is shown in more detail in Figures 7 and 8. Adapter member **14** comprises a substantially hollow body **111**. Body **111** of adapter member **14** also comprises a vent flange **112**, which may be coupled to cover member **12**, and a building flange **110**, which may be coupled to conduit **30**. When coupled between cover member **12** and conduit **30**, adapter member **14** provides fluid communication between vent passageway **36** and conduit **30**.

[0050] In the illustrated embodiment of Figure 2, conduit **30** comprises walls **28A**, **28B**. Building flange **110** of adapter member **14** is sized and shaped to conform with walls **28A**, **28B** of conduit **30**. In the illustrated embodiment, building flange **110** fits into walls **28A**, **28B** of conduit **30**. In alternative embodiments, walls **28A**, **28B** of conduit **30** fit into building flange **110**. In the illustrated embodiment (see Figures 1 and 8), building flange **110** is circular in cross-section. Those skilled in the art will appreciate that this circular shape merely represents one among many possible shapes of building flanges **110**. A particular size and/or shape of building flange **110** may be selected to conform with the size and/or shape of conduit **30**. For example, building flange **110** may be square or rectangular in cross-section.

[0051] In some embodiments, building flange **110** is attached to conduit **30** using fasteners (not shown) which project through building flange **110** and walls **28A**, **28B** of conduit **30**. Such fasteners may include screws, nails, rivets, staples or the like. In other embodiments, building flange **110** is secured to walls **28A**, **28B** using a suitable adhesive or one or more tie-straps. In still other embodiments, building flange **110** is resiliently deformed for insertion into conduit **30** such that, when inserted, building flange **110** exerts a force against walls **28A**, **28B** to form a friction fit. Alternatively, conduit **30** may be resiliently deformed for insertion into building flange **110** such that, when inserted, conduit **30** exerts a force against building flange **110** to form a friction fit.

[0052] Figures 2 and 9 depict the attachment of adapter member **14** to cover member **12**. Cover member **12** includes an adapter receiving rim **116** which comprises a pair of generally parallel flanges **118**, **120**. Flanges **118**, **120** are spaced apart to form slot **122** therebetween. In one of its sidewalls, flange **120** comprises an indent

124 which opens into slot **122**. Vent flange **112** of adapter member **14** comprises a projection **114** on a corresponding one of its sides. When cover member **12** is coupled to adapter member **14**, vent flange **112** is inserted into slot **122**, such that projection **114** fits into indent **124** of flange **120**. Together, projection **114** and indent **124** function to secure cover member **12** to adapter member **14**. Preferably, when vent flange **112** is inserted into slot **122**, vent flange **112** resiliently deforms one or both of flanges **118**, **120**, such that flanges **118**, **120** exert pressure on vent flange **112** which helps to secure cover member **12** to adapter member **14**. Adapter member **14** may be removable from cover member **12** by similarly deforming one or both of flanges **118**, **120** and withdrawing vent flange **112** from slot **122**.

[0053] In the illustrated embodiment, vent flange **112** of adapter member **14** and adapter receiving rim **116** of cover member **12** are rectangular in cross-section. Those skilled in the art will appreciate that this rectangular shape represents one among many possible shapes for vent flange **112** and adapter receiving rim **116**. For example, building flange **110** may alternatively be circular in cross-section.

[0054] As will be apparent to those skilled in the art in the light of the foregoing disclosure, many alterations and modifications are possible in the practice of this invention without departing from the spirit or scope thereof. For example:

- In the illustrated embodiment of Figure 9, vent flange **112** is shown as having a single projection **114** on one of its sides and only flange **120** is shown as having a corresponding indent **124**. In other embodiments, vent flange **112** may have a plurality of projections similar to projection **114** and flange **120** may comprise a corresponding plurality of indents. Vent flange **112** may have one or more projections on its other side and flange **118** may have

one or more corresponding indents. In still other embodiments, vent flange **112** may have one or more indents and generally parallel flanges **118**, **120** may comprise corresponding protrusions.

- In alternative embodiments, a suitable adhesive may be used to help secure adapter member **14** to cover member **12**. A suitable adhesive may also be used in combination with adapter receiving rim **116** and vent flange **112** of the illustrated embodiment.
- In some embodiments, a suitable adhesive may be used to help secure screen **16** to cover member **12**.
- Figure 3B depicts a screen **16'** having a third surface **66'** that is substantially planar in its nominal state and Figure 3A depicts a screen **16** having a third surface **66** with a single curve in its nominal state. Those skilled in the art will appreciate that screens according to the invention may incorporate third surfaces having a plurality of curves (i.e. one or more convex portions and one or more concave portions).
- The above description and the claims set out below refer to gas flowing through vent **11**. Those skilled in the art will appreciate that solid and liquid matter may also flow through vent **11**. Typically, such solids and liquids will be suspended in a gas. Accordingly, the word "gas" should not be interpreted in a limiting sense.
- In the illustrated embodiments, portions **70** and **73** of cover member surface **69** are separated from one another. In general, portions **70**, **73** may overlap one another.

[0055] Accordingly, the scope of the invention is to be construed in accordance with the substance defined by the following claims.